THE BLACK NORTHERN MIGRATION OF 1910-1920, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND PHILADELPHIA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE MASTER OF ARTS

BY

LUCILLE GOODMAN

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

AUGUST 1975

R=ii T=47

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Negroes who migrated from the South to the North during the period between 1910 and 1920 expected improvement in employment, educational opportunity and living environment. This migration to the North was the most extensive movement of a single group in American History. These migrants came largely from Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, South Carolina, Arkansas and Mississippi. The migrations, which were apparent during the inter-census period 1910-1920, were especially significant because they revealed a decided increase in the volume of migration and a peculiar change in the major direction.

CHAPTER I

PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF MIGRATION

Fundamentally, behind Negro movements, as behind those of any people, there must be a dissatisfaction with conditions in the present location and the promise of improvement in some other region. In the case of Negro migrations the "push" which has been of dominant influence has been the inability to make a satisfactory living in the black belt while the principal "pull" has been the prospect of greater economic opportunities in Northern industries.[1]

A major cause of Negro migration during the period between 1910-1920 can be traced directly to the ravage of the cotton crop by the boll weevil. The damage it did varied according to the rainfall and the harshness of the winter, increasing with the former and decreasing with the latter. "At times the damage has been to the extent of a loss of 50 percent of the crop, estimated at 400,000 bales of cotton annually, about 4,500,000 bales since the invasion or $250,000,000 worth of cotton."[2] The output of the South being cut off, the planter had less income to provide supplies for his black tenants and the prospects for future production being dark, merchants accustomed to giving planters credit had

---

[1] W. O. Scroggs, "Interstate Migration of Negro Population," Journal of Political Economy 25 (December 1917): 1040.

[2] Ray Stannard Baker, "The Negro Goes North," World's Work 34 (July 1917): 272.

to refuse.

Another cause of this migration was the suffering due to the floods aggravated by the depredations of the boll weevil. The United States government had not been as ready to build levees against a natural enemy to property as it had been to provide fortifications for warfare. The first disastrous floods came in 1858 and 1859, breaking many of the levees, the destruction of which was practically completed by the floods of 1865 and 1869. There was an annual rise in the stream, but since 1874 the river system had fourteen times devasted large areas of this section with destructive floods.[3]

For a long time southern farmers had been importuned to adopt a more diversified method of farming to offset the effects of unexpected misfortune in the cotton industry and to preserve the value of the soil. Following the ravages of the boll weevil, the idea gained wide application. The cotton acreage was cut down and other crops substituted. The cultivation of cotton required about five times as many laborers as the cultivation of corn and the work was fairly continuous for a few employees throughout the year. Additional unemployment for Negro tenant farmers was an expected result of this diversification. Diversification took the form of new specialties like peanuts, cattle, truck farming, and fruits growing rather than live-at-home subsistence farming.[4]

Negro tenants usually had little or no money with which to pay rent and provide the necessities of life while they waited for the maturing, harvesting and selling of their crop--which was usually the single crop,

---

[3]Ibid., p. 271.

[4]George B. Tindall, The Emergence of the New South--1913-1915 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 124.

cotton. Thus a system had developed whereby the Negro farmers obtained their food, clothing and other essentials by long-time payments, either directly from the landlord, or in cases where the planter was unable, or did not wish to furnish these necessities, from the local merchants, the owner securing a lien on the crop for the rent and whatever supplies he advanced and the merchant securing another lien to cover his investments. One of the results of this crop-lien system had been the tendency of many planters or store keepers to charge exorbitant prices for the supplies, which the Negro tenant obtained on time instead of with cash. However, the tenancy system had frequently resulted in much dissatisfaction with the final crop settlements, at which time the crop was shared between tenant and owner, and from the tenant's portion from which was deducted the payment for all advances.

The circumstances of unemployment which contributed so largely to the restless mood in some sections of the South were due primarily to a lack of sufficient money to support labor during the lean seasons. The planters often found it difficult to obtain loans from the banks during periods of agricultural depression and in many cases had been without means of making the customary advances of supplies, being obliged by their financial losses to cut down their labor force and their farming operations. This, of course, added to the financial plight of the Negroes.[5]

Low wages had also been a serious phase of the Negro's economic situation in the South, for throughout this area wages for all classes

---

[5]Thomas Jackson Woofter, Basis of Racial Adjustment (New York: Ginn and Company, 1925), p. 30.

had been lower than in the North. Women who received $2.50 a week in domestic service could earn from $2.10 to $2.50 a day, and men receiving $1.10 and $1.25 a day could earn from $2.50 to $3.75 per day in the various industries in the North. An intensive study of the migration to Pittsburgh made by Abraham Epstein gives an idea of the difference in wages paid in the North and the South. His findings may be quoted:

> The great mass of workers get higher wages here than in the places from which they come. Fifty-six per cent received less than two dollars a day in the South, while only five per cent received such wages in Pittsburgh. Sixty-two per cent received between $2.00 and $3.00 per day in Pittsburgh as compared with 25 per cent in the South, and 28 per cent received between $3.00 and $3.60 in this city as compared with four per cent in the South.[6]

While economic conditions, North and South, had been largely responsible for the mass movements of Negroes which had occurred since the beginning of the war, southern Negroes had constantly listed police brutality and lack of justice in the courts as another cause of the migration. Negroes largely distrusted the courts and had to depend on the influence of their aristocratic white friends. When a white man assaulted a Negro, he was not punished. When a white man killed a Negro he was usually freed without extended legal proceedings, but when a Negro killed a white man, whether in self defense or not, the Negro must die. Negro witnesses counted for nothing except when testifying against members of their own race. The testimony of a white man was conclusive in every instance. In no southern state could a Negro woman get a verdict for seduction, nor in most cases enter a suit against a white man; nor, where a white man was concerned, was the law of consent made to apply to a

---

[6] R. R. Wright, "The Migration of Negroes to the North," Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 27 (May 1906): 567.

Negro girl. Throughout the Black Belt Negroes suffered from arrests and impositions for petty offenses which made their lives sometimes miserable. The large number of Negroes owning automobiles was a source of many conflicts. Many collisions, possibly avoidable, had resulted in wresting from the Negroes concerned excessive damages which increased the revenues of the courts.[7]

The fee system in the courts of the South was one of the most effective causes of the migration. In Alabama employers of labor had fought this fee system from 1914 to 1918 and finally got it abolished in Jefferson (County Birmingham), Alabama. Under this system the sheriff received a fee for feeding all prisoners. The greater the number of prisoners, the greater would be the income of the sheriff's office. As a result, it became customary in Jefferson County to arrest Negroes in large numbers. Deputy sheriffs would go out to mining camps where there were large numbers of laborers and bring back fifty or more Negroes at a time. This condition became unbearable both to the employer and to the employee. The fee bill, according to the sheriff's annual report for 1914 was $37,688.90. The law provided that for each prisoner the sheriff would receive 30 cents a day for feeding; but actually the sheriff fed them for 10 cents a day. It was clear that he made a net profit of $25,125.94 during the one fiscal year, or at the same rate for his term of four years, $100,503.76.[8]

Another frequent complaint was directed against the accommodations for travel. In train travel it generally happened that the cars were

---

[7]Emmet J. Scott, Negro Migration During the War (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), pp. 19-20.

[8]Ibid., p. 21.

crowded because the amount of space allotted was insufficient, and Negroes as a class were denied accommodation in sleeping and dining cars. Usually there was but one toilet for both sexes and the waiting rooms at stations were unclean and unsanitary. Then there were numerous petty offenses, which in themselves appeared trifling, but which were on the whole, considerably annoying. White men were permitted to come into the Negro section of the coach and entertain the conductor, newsboy and flagman, all of whom usually made their headquarters there. The drunkards, the insane and other undesirables were forced into this compartment among Negro women who had to listen to oaths and vulgar utterances. In stopping at some points, the trains halted the Negro car in muddy and abominably disagreeable places; the rudeness and incivility of the public servants were ever apparent, and at the stations Negroes waited at a separate window until every white passenger had purchased a ticket before he was waited on, although he might be delayed long enough to miss the train.[9]

In numerous instances lynching and the fear of the mob greatly accelerated the exodus. For example, Negroes in Florida gave as one of their reasons for going North the horrible lynchings in Tennessee. The white press in Georgia maintained that lynchings were driving Negroes in large numbers from that state. A careful study of the movement, however, shows that bad treatment by representatives of the law caused almost as many Negroes to leave the South as did lynchings; for, whereas lynchings were more or less sporadic, persecutions and mistreatment by representatives of the law were trials which all Negroes had continually to bear

---

[9]Louise Venable Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward (New York: Columbia University Press, 1920), pp. 51-52.

and from which they were anxious to escape.[10]

Other factors have also played a part in producing Negro migration. The Negro's knowledge of the possibilities of migration and his attitude toward it were inevitably influenced by his personal relations with others and by the activities of the social group of which he was a member. Conversations with those already moving North, published discussions and appeals, and the general atmosphere of unrest which existed in many parts of the South, all exerted an effect upon the phenomenon of migration.

One of the chief stimuli was discussion. The talk in the barber shops and grocery stores where men assembled soon began to take to the form of reasons for leaving. There it was the custom to review all the instances of mistreatment and injustice which fell to the lot of the Negro in the South. It was here also that letters from the North were read and fresh news on the exodus was first given out. One letter from a person newly arrived in Chicago described his circumstances to a friend in Hattiesburg, Mississippi: "I just begin to feel like a man," he wrote. "It's a great deal of pleasure knowing that you have got some privilege. My children are going to the same school with the whites, and I don't have to unable to no one. I have registered will vote the next election and there isn't any 'yes sir and no sir' its all yes and no and Sam and Bill."[11]

Probably the most influential Negro newspaper was the Chicago

---

[10] Ibid., p. 53.

[11] H. A. Lett, Additional Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918: "Letters from South to Friends North and from North to Friends South," Journal of Negro History 4 (July, October 1919): 292.

Defender, published in the North yet read widely in the South. This paper reportedly increased its circulation from 10,000 to 93,000 during the years of the war migration. By the use of glaring headlines and sensational articles it carried on a definite propaganda of migration which had an incalculable effect upon southern Negroes. Copies were passed around until worn out. One prominent Negro asserted that "Negroes grab the Defender like a hungry mule grabs fodder." In Gulfport, Mississippi, a man was regarded "intelligent" if he read the Defender. It was said that in Laurel, Mississippi, old men who did not know how to read would buy it because it was regarded as precious.[12]

It was reported that this paper named the exodus "The Great Northern Drive," and took full responsibility for inducing "the poor brethren from the South." It was accused of ruining Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and was, therefore, forbidden in several towns in the South. A correspondent said: "White people are paying more attention to the race in order to keep them in the South, but the Chicago Defender has emblazoned upon their minds 'Bound for the promised land'." The Defender not only printed direct appeals to them to come North but gave much space to news items, anecdotes and poems which created the impression of a general mass movement and effort to escape from a life of bondage and oppression in the South.[13]

A stronger influence than this, though not quite so frequent, was the returned migrant who was a living example of the prosperity of the North. It was a frequent complaint that these men were as effective as

---

[12]Scott, Negro Migration During the War, p. 30.

[13]Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward, p. 53.

labor agents in urging Negro laborers to go North. Numerous instances were reported of men who came South to visit their families and returned North with thirty to forty men. It was suspected that many of these were supplied with funds for the trip by the northern firms which employed them. A woman whose daughter had gone North had been talking of her daughter's success. The reports were so opposite to the record of the girl at home that they were not taken seriously. Soon, however, the daughter came home with apparently unlimited money and beautiful clothes, and carried her mother back with her. This was sufficient. It was remarked afterwards: "If she can make $2.50 a day as lazy as she was, I know I can make $4.00."[14]

The labor agents were very important in stimulating the movement. Employment agencies, recently multiplied to meet the demand for labor, found themselves unable to cope with the situation and sent agents into the South to induce Negroes by offers of free transportation and high wages to go North. Agents were more active in large cities where their presence was not so conspicuous. They were difficult to discover because of the very guarded manner in which they worked. An agent, for example, might walk briskly down the street through a group of Negroes, and without turning his head would say in a low tone, "Anybody want to go to Chicago, see me." That statement was usually sufficient. The agents would help organize Negroes into clubs which then secured special travel rates, especially on the Illinois Central Railroad. Chicago bound

---

[14]Scott, Negro Migration During the War, p. 36.

"specials" began rolling from town to town in the South, wherever the Illinois Central had tracks, and Negroes packed not only the passenger coaches but also the special freight cars that were added one by one. "Farwell--We're Good and Gone" and "Bound for the Promised Land" and "Bound to the Land of Hope" were among the slogans chalked on the side of the trains by the happy "exodusters," as the departing Negroes were called.[15]

---

[15]Carter G. Woodson, A Century of Negro Migration (Washington, D. C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1918), p. 174.

CHAPTER II

EFFORTS TO CHECK THE MIGRATION

The initial departure of Negroes from the South usually elicited no concern from the authorities. It was assumed that their actions were merely expressions of a desire for travel and that they would soon return. When, however, they did not return and host of others followed, the white South became deeply concerned and endeavored to check the migration. Throughout the exodus, drastic legislation and force were employed. In Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi and Georgia, laws were passed in an effort to suppress the activities of labor agents. Licenses were made prohibitively high, and labor agents were arrested and heavily fined. In some cases labor agents were penalized to prohibit their operations entirely, and they frequently suffered physical injury.

Alabama was aware of the Negro exodus and some cities took steps to check it. For example, the Montgomery City Commission on September 19, 1916, passed ordinances "that any person who enticed, persuaded, or influenced any laborer or other persons to leave the City of Montgomery for the purpose of being employed at any other place as a laborer must, on conviction, be fined not less than one dollar nor more than one hundred dollars or might be sentenced to hard labor for the City for not more than six months, one or both in the discretion of the court. The other ordinance provided that any person, firm or corporation who published, printed or wrote or delivered or distributed or posted or caused

to be published, printed or written, or delivered or distributed or posted any advertisement, letter, newspaper, pamphlet, handbill or other writing, for the purpose of enticing, persuading or influencing any laborer or other person to leave the City of Montgomery for the purpose of being employed at any other place as a laborer must, on conviction, be fined not less than one hundred dollars, or may be sentenced to hard labor for the city for not more than six months, one or both in the discretion of the court. As a result, labor agents and other leaders, both white and black, were arrested throughout the state."[1]

The treatment of Negro migrants in Mississippi was similar to that in Alabama. At Jackson, the "pass riders", as they were called, were so molested by the police that they were finally driven from the town. In the same town the white citizens reportedly forced the railroads to discontinue giving passes to Negroes because such practices threatened their interests. Negroes were secretly enticed away; frequently after they had been dispersed from railway stations, they were imprisoned as they attempted to board the trains. Oftentimes police interfered with Negroes leaving, especially when they were suspected of leaving on passes. To circumvent this situation, Negroes would go two or three stations below Jackson where there were no policemen and board the trains. These efforts to keep Negroes from leaving by intimidation or other means, simply served to make them more determined to leave.[2]

At Greenville, Mississippi, trains were stopped, some Negroes were

---

[1] Scott, The Negro Migration During the War, p. 76.

[2] R. H. Leavell, Negro Migration in 1916-17 (New York: University Press, 1969), p. 27.

dragged from and others were prevented from boarding them. Strangers were searched for evidence that might convict them as labor agents. Local authorities were sometimes reprimanded for interfering with interstate commerce, and complaints were lodged against the brutality of police, whose efforts to intimidate Negroes carried them beyond bounds. In another instance, a chartered railroad car carrying fifty Negro men and women was sidetracked at Brookhaven for three days. The man conducting the passengers was arrested; but when no charge was brought against him, he was released.[3]

Many efforts by individual whites as well as by authorities to halt Negro migration are on record. At Hattiesburg, Mississippi, ticket agents attempted on the advice of white citizens to interfere with Negroes leaving by refusing to sell them tickets. Letters to plantation hands were detained and telegrams were delayed. At Meridian, Mississippi, a trainload of Negroes en route to the North was delayed by the chief of police on a technical charge. A United States marshal arrested the officer and placed him under heavy bond for delaying the train. Federal authorities were importuned to stop the migration movement. They withdrew the assistance of the Employment Department, but admitted that they could not stop the interstate migration.[4]

Throughout the South prohibitive measures were used against labor agents. In Florida, labor recruiting early assumed a serious aspect. Precaution was taken to impede the progress of the work of labor agents among Negroes, at first by moral persuasion and then by actual force.

---

[3]Ibid., p. 28.

[4]W. W. Stone, "How to Stop Migration," American Fertilizer Control 58 (June 16, 1923): 62.

Cities and towns enacted measures requiring a very high license for labor agents, imposing in case of failure to comply with these regulations a penalty of imprisonment. For example, in Tampa, when these operations were brought to the attention of the authorities, Joe Robinson, a Negro officer, was detailed to investigate the matter. He discovered that two Negro men were implicated in the migration. These men were charged with having collected seven dollars from each of several hundred Negroes who wanted to go to Pennsylvania. A meeting among the Negroes of Tampa was then held to secure pledges of assistance for the Negro officer, then making an effort to prevent the exodus. Being under the impression that the ignorant members of their race were being imposed upon by agents from without, many of these leading Negroes pledged themselves to assist in the suppression of the exodus.[5]

In Jacksonville, where the labor agents flourished, the City Council passed an ordinance requiring that migration agents should pay $1,000 license fee to recruit labor sent out of the state under penalty of $600 fine and 60 days in jail. Several police detectives were assigned the task of arresting those who were said to be spreading false reports among Negroes to the effect that special trains were ready on various specified dates to take them to points in the North. When, therefore, large crowds of Negroes gathered near the Union Depot in Jacksonville, awaiting the so-called special train, they were handled rather roughly by the police when it was shown that they had not purchased tickets and there was no one to vouch for their transportation.[6]

---

[5] Ibid., p. 64.

[6] Ibid., p. 68.

In Georgia, the local governments early took action to prevent the drain of the labor population to Northern states through the operation of labor agents. It was soon observed, however, that these agents worked out their schemes so clandestinely that it was impossible to check the movement by such measures. Fearing that the general unrest among the Negroes of the city and that efforts of the authorities to keep them from being transported from Macon to the North might result in a riot with which the city authorities would not be able to cope, Chief of Police George S. Riley recommended to the Civil Service Commission that forty magazine rifles be purchased for the police department. At that time the police had only pistols and clubs. The charge was that surliness existed among certain Negroes and that the police wanted to be able to cope with any situation that might arise. The City Council, thereafter, raised the license fee for labor agents to $25,000, requiring also that such agents be recommended by ten local ministers, ten manufacturers and twenty-five business men. The police of Macon were very active in running down labor agents violating this law.[7]

Americus, Georgia, was carefully watched and searched for persons inducing Negroes to migrate, as there was a large exodus of Negroes from this city to the tobacco fields of Connecticut. Negroes attempting to leave were arrested and held to see if by legal measures they could be deterred from going North. The officers in charge of this raid were armed with state warrants charging misdemeanors and assisted by a formidable array of policemen and deputy sheriffs. Negroes were roughly

---

[7] Atlanta Constitution, November 1, 1916, p. 5.

taken from the trains and crowded into the prisons to await trial for these so-called misdemeanors. Although the majority of the migrants were set free after their trains had left the city, the leaders in most cases suffered humiliation at the hands of the officers of the law.[8]

At Thomasville, Georgia, a white man and a Negro were arrested and charged with the usual crime of being labor agents. Much excitement followed. Fearing serious results, the Negro ministers of this city endeavored to stop the exodus. A committee of their most prominent citizens met with the mayor and discussed the matter freely. They arranged for a large mass meeting of white and Negro citizens who undertook to cooperate in bringing the exodus to an end. The white citizens of Waycross experienced the same trouble with labor agents, but had much difficulty in finding out exactly who they were and how they contrived to make such inroads on the population.[9]

The situation became more critical in Savannah, one of the largest assembling points for migrants in the South. When the loss of labor became so serious and ordinary efforts to check it failed, more drastic measures were resorted to. On the thirteenth of August, 1912, for example, when a rumor spread thourgh the city that two special trains would leave for the North Negroes, who, already much disturbed by the agitation for and against the movement, were easily induced to start for the North. When, at about five o'clock that morning 2,000 Negroes assembled at the station for this purpose, the county police, joined by a detachment of

---

[8]W. T. B. Williams and Francis D. Tyson, Reports on the Migration from Georgia (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 84.

[9]Ibid., p. 85.

city officers, appeared at the station and attempted to clear the tracks; but the crowd was so large the officers finally found their task impossible, for as they would clear one section of the tracks the crowd would surge to another. The crowd was extremely orderly and good natured and the two arrests that were made were for minor offenses. As these trains failed to move according to orders, over 300 of this group paid their own fares and proceeded to the North.[10]

However, a few days later Savannah reached a crisis in the labor movement agitation, when over 100 Negroes were placed under arrest at the Union Depot and sent to the police barracks. Several patrol wagon loads of police arrived at the station and immediately formed a cordon around all Negroes in the lobby. Every exit from the station was guarded. As a result, many persons were attracted to the station and excitement ran high. Many Negroes were arrested in an effort to find the leaders of the movement; but upon failure to discover the facts in the case, the lieutenant in charge ordered the men in custody to be imprisoned on charges of loitering.

After a three-day conference at Waycross, Georgia, Negroes reached a decision as to the best manner to present their cause to the white people with a view to securing their cooperation towards the improvement of conditions in the South to make that section more habitable. "There are four things of which our people complain," they said, "and this conference urges our white friends to secure for us these things, with all possible speed. First, more protection at the hands of the law. We ask that the law of the state, made and enforced by white men, should be

---

[10]Ibid., p. 90.

made to apply with exact justice to both races. We have no sympathy for criminals, but we ask that the innocent shall be protected to the fullest extend of the law. Second, that more liberal provisions be made for the education of our people." They commended Governor Dorsey for his courageous recommendation in his inaugural address that an agricultural school should be established for Negroes in some center in southern Georgia, and asked their friends everywhere to urge the members of the legislature from the various counties to put Governor Dorsey's idea into law.[11]

Tuskegee Institute was also quick to offer a remedy for the migration. In the latter part of September, 1916, the institution made a strong effort to persuade Negro farmers to remain on the land instead of going to the cities. Conferences were held with the bankers of Tuskegee and with many planters of Macon County, and a method of dealing with the situation was worked out. At the twenty-sixth annual Negro conference at Tuskegee Institute, resolutions were adopted and broadcast to Negroes in the South. These reolutions recited the distress and suffering impelling Negroes to migrate, expressing the appreciation of the necessity to do something to better their condition by embracing the new opportunities offered them in the North. On the other hand, the conference felt that there were many permanent opportunities for the masses of Negro people in the South, which was then entering upon a great era of development. Reference was made to the millions of acres of land yet to be cultivated, cities to be built, railroads to be extended and mines to be worked. Negroes were reminded that in the South they had

---

[11] Atlanta Constitution, June 1, 1917, p. 3.

acquired land, buildings, and property valued at about five hundred million dollars, therefore, they should stay on the soil which they owned.[12]

Addressing a word to the white people of the South, the conference declared that the reason so many Negroes desired to leave was not because they did not love the Southland but because they believed that in the North they would not only have more opportunity to earn more money but also they would get better treatment, better protection under the law and better school facilities for their children. The conference urged, therefore, that southern white people avail themselves of their greatest opportunity to cooperate with Negroes in various communities and to work for the common welfare of all. The delegates believed that the time had come for the best element of both races to unite to protect their interests and to the end that more effective work could be done to build a greater South.[13]

Reconciliation was sought though wages increased from ten to twenty-five percent and in some cases as much as 100 percent to hold labor. In addition, attempts were made to ascertain from Negroes the reasons for migrating. In almost all cases the chief complaint concerned unfair treatment. An effort was made to meet this challenge by calling conferences and by giving publicity to campaigns to make unfair settlements and other grievances unpopular. Thus, in Bolivar County, Mississippi, a meeting was called, ostensibly to look after the economic welfare of the Delta country, but in reality to develop some plan for holding labor. A subcommittee of seventeen men, twelve whites and five Negroes, was appoin-

---

[12]"National Conference on Negro Migration," Nation 104 (February 8, 1917): 149.

[13]Ibid., p. 151.

ted to look into the labor situation. The subcommittee met and reported to the body that the present labor shortage was due to migration, and that migration was due to a feeling of insecurity before the law, the unrestrained action of mobs, unfair methods of yearly settlement on farms and inadequate school facilities. As a result of the report, an appropriation of $25,000 was made towards an agricultural high school, as a step towards showing an interest in the Negroes of Bolivar County and thus giving them reasons for remaining. A campaign was started to make unpopular the practice among farmers of robbing Negroes of the returns from their labor, and a general effort was made by a few of the leading men behind the movement to create a better feeling between the races.[14]

---

[14]"How Can the South Meet the Negro Migration Movement," Manufacturers Records 83 (May 3, 1923): 88-90.

CHAPTER III

MIGRATION TO THE NORTH

Despite efforts to stop the exodus of Negroes from the South to the North, thousands of Negroes reached the so-called "promised land." They settled basically in the large urban centers of Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia, largely because these cities offered economic opportunities for Negro labor. Their immediate problem, however, was to adjust themselves to the new environment.

The adjustment of these rural people to city life involved a sequence of experiences by which they became urbanized. The first experience was the migration itself, which sorted out the population leaving certain classes on the farm and shifting the more ambitious into the industrial and business establishments of the city. Segregation was the next experience. The newcomers entered a number of occupations and were stratified into a variety of economic and social classes. These classes tended to be separate from the same class of old, established residents. More powerful still was the residential segregation which occured when the newcomers settled into more or less solid colonies.[1]

In Chicago, it is estimated that within a period of eighteen months beginning January, 1916, more than fifty thousand Negroes entered the

---

[1] Thomas Jackson Woofter, Negro Problems in Cities (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1928), p. 119.

city. This estimate was based on averages taken from actual count of daily arrivals.[2]

Many of the migrants came to Chicago because the stock yards were sorely in need of men. It was reported that the stock yards had agents in the South. Whether it is true or not, it is a fact that it was most widely advertised throughout the states of Mississippi and Louisiana that fifty thousand men were needed, and the packers were providing houses for migrants and caring for them until they had established themselves. The Illinois Central Railroad brought hundreds to Chicago on free transportation with the understanding that the men would enter the employment of the company. The Negro newspapers published in Chicago urged Negroes to leave the South and promised employment and protection.[3]

Migration was the major factor in the growth of the Negro community, and most migrants were coming from outside of the state. In 1910 the Negro population of Chicago totaled 92,501. The states located directly south of Chicago supplied a larger segment of the population than the southeastern states, but there were sizable groups born in Virginia and Georgia.[4]

By 1910, over 30 percent of the migrants lived in predominantly Negro sections of the city and over 60 percent in areas that were more than 20 percent Negro. The South Side black belt was expanding to accommodate the growing population. The new people from Mississippi, Alabama,

---

[2]Scott, Negro Migration During the War, p. 102.

[3]Ibid., p. 103.

[4]Allan H. Spear, Black Chicago The Making of a Negro Ghetto (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 11.

Georgia and other states crowded in wherever they could find shelter. Friends and relatives had to be hospitable, even if it was bad for all of them. People who had lived in their own houses down South on a small piece of land were now compelled to crowd in with other families causing a congestion that was uncomfortable and menacing.[5]

Soon Negro colonies settled beyond the confines of the South Side. The oldest colony was on the west side of Lake Street from Ashland Boulevard to California Avenue, its main artery. It was several decades old and was reported now to have over 8,000 population. The population increased, but the improvement did not keep pace with the incoming people.

West Fourteenth Street was the principal artery of a Negro colony less than four years old, but already numbering more than 15,000. Landlords had prevailed upon great numbers of newly arrived Southern Negroes and some from the South Side to settle in the run-down houses and tenements vacated by their former Jewish occupants for better homes farther west.

Little Italy, on the North Side too, had capitulated to the Negro influx. There were between 8,000 and 10,000 Negroes on the near North Side in houses formerly occupied and in many cases still owned by Italians.[6]

Sixty percent of the Negro inhabitants of Chicago were confined to jobs of the personal service variety, such as waiters, cooks, maids, porters and janitors. Some of the women were hairdressers and chiropodists, plying their trade among the rich white families. The number of

---

[5]Mary E. McDowell, "Hovels or Homes," Opportunity 7 (March 1929): 74.

[6]Alzada P. Comstock, "Chicago Housing Conditions: Problems of the Negro," American Journal of Sociology 18 (September 1910): 243.

men and women employed in plants and factories before the war was negligible. The stock yards employed a few Negroes mixed with Irish and Polish. In factories, however, it was exceptional to see a Negro except as a porter, and that was not the rule.

Although there were many openings for skilled laborers, Negro migrants were not qualified for the specialized tasks. Most of them were only competent to do the heavy, unskilled work. The industries employing large numbers of Negro workers were in slaughtering, packing of meat, and other food products; iron foundries and iron and steel products; laundries; needle trades; hotels; railroads; pullman and dining car services; tanneries; taxicab upkeep and repair; and mail order houses.[7]

However, Negroes took their places in the following industries in large numbers. First, laundries: of fifteen large laundries employing 937 women, there were 790 Negroes, a proportion which represented more than 84 percent. Second, date fig and nut factories: Negro women had a practical monopoly on this work. From six factories the statistics show a total of 635 Negroes and 48 whites employed. The steel industry gave increased opportunity. The Illinois steel workers in 1910 had seven Negro employees, 35 in 1916, 1,209 in 1919 which fell off to 338 during the after-the-war depression, but had since increased to 1,014 and to an average of 600. Other steel companies had given similar consideration, employing between 12 and 20 percent colored help.[8]

Negroes also migrated in large numbers to New York City where

---

[7]Claude A. Barnett, "We Win a Place in Industry," Opportunity 7 (March 1929): 84.

[8]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Occupation and Population, 2:500.

they encountered similar problems with housing and employment. By 1920, the census count was 152,467 Negroes.[9] While New York offered a diversity of employment, the city had no such basic industries as could be found, for example, in the automobile plants of Detroit, or the iron and steel works and meat slaughtering industries of Chicago. The narrow strip between 114th and 145th Streets, Fifth and Eighth Avenues, in four directions included rows of apartments or flat houses all inhabited by Negroes. The houses were in good repair, windows, entrances, halls, sidewalks and streets were clean and the houses comfortable and respectable inside to a degree not often found in a workingman's locality.

Room-crowding and high cost living were the most important factors which led to the rapid deterioration of Harlem housing. The worst phase of overcrowding was found where one room served as living room, bedroom and kitchen, furnished with table, bed, and cookstove. A five-room house might have five families using the same sink and toilet. Old tenements had as high as twenty-five to thirty families, each family occupying one furnished room. Rents, traditionally high in Harlem, reached higher proportions in the 1920's. They skyrocketed in response to unprecedented demand created by heavy Negro migration and settlement within a restricted area. In 1919 the average Harlemite paid somewhat above $21 or $22 per month for rent.[10]

---

[9]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Occupation and Population, 4:102.

[10]Gilbert Osofsky, Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), p. 136.

In 1910, 24,528 Negro men were employed as porters, waiters, messengers, elevator tenders, chauffeurs and janitors. This represented nearly half of all the Negro men at work in New York. The work was not difficult, the pay was fair and in lieu of anything better they drifted into it.[11]

The largest single group of Negro workers was longshoremen. There were 5,397 in 1920: 14 percent of all the longshoremen in the city and 9 percent of all the Negro men at work. Negro women were freely employed as laundresses and servants. Though they were in fierce competition with the women of other races, 24,438, or 60 percent of all the Negro women working in New York, were either laundresses or servants.[12]

In work requiring a period of apprenticeship, Negroes were rarely employed, which limited the skilled workers and the number of Negroes eligible for membership in certain trade unions. There were only 56 Negro apprentices of the 9,561 counted in the census of 1920. In work requiring contact with the public in the capacity of salesman or representative, Negroes were infrequently employed.

In 1906, skilled work requiring membership in unions, they were employed only in the following: asphalt workers, 320; teamsters, 300; rockdrillers and tool-sharpeners, 250; cigar makers, 121; bricklayers, 90; waiters, 90; carpenters, 60; plasterers, 45; double drum hoisters, 30; safety and portable engineers, 26; eccentric firemen, 15; letter carriers, 10; pressmen, 10; printers, 6; butchers, 3; lathers, 3;

---

[11]Charles S. Johnson, "Black Workers and the City," Survey 53 (March 1925): 642.

[12]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Occupation and Population , 4:745.

painters, 3; coopers, 2; sheet metal workers, 1; rockmen, 1. This makes a total of 1,386 men, a little over 5 percent being union. There were numerous omissions from skilled trades. There were no machinists, no structural iron workers, no plumbers, no garment makers.[13]

In 1910, there were but 268 Negro carpenters in New York City, but in 1920 the number had increased to 737. Chauffeurs who numbered 490 in 1910 were 2,195 in 1920. Ten years previously, there were no known clothing workers, but in 1910 there were over 6,000. The same applies to workers in textile industries who numbered at last count 2,685. Electricians, machinists and musicians had increased over a hundred percent. The number of shoemakers jumped from 14 to 481, stationery fireman from 249 to 1,076, mechanics from practically none to 462 and real estate agents from 89 to 247. Furthermore, after looking at the city of New York, we find Philadelphia with a Negro population according to the 1910 census of 84,459.[14]

The main reasons for Negroes coming to Philadelphia were the railroads and industries. The Pennsylvania and Erie Railroads found it impossible to keep their systems in repair because of a shortage of labor. They, therefore, sent labor agents into the South to persuade Negroes to supply this demand. Early in the summer of 1916 the agents of these railroads picked up trainloads of Negroes from Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Pensacola, Florida. They brought about twelve thousand migrants into Pennsylvania, one thousand of whom were sent to

---

[13]Mary W. Ovington, "The Negro in the Trades Unions in New York," Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 27 (May 1906): 90.

[14]U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Occupation and Population, 12:402.

Philadelphia.[15]

Furthermore, the industrial plants situated in and adjacent to Philadelphia were also influential in attracting Negroes to the city. As early as August, 1916, the National Hosiery and Underwear Manufacturers of Philadelphia proposed bringing Negro girls from the South to work in knitting mills. In preparation for this work, girls were at that time being trained at Endfield, North Carolina, to take permanent positions in the Northern mills.[16]

The large number of Negroes that came to Philadelphia created a housing crisis. Most of them lived in the south central part of the city. The newcomers had to use houses long abandoned as unfit for occupancy. Stables were converted into camps; shacks were built of flimsy construction; and churches and other buildings were opened for temporary relief of the situation. There was not much room-crowding. Only in seven apartments did the average number of occupants exceed two persons per room, while 758 persons occupied houses having four to six rooms.[17]

Economic opportunities for the majority of Negroes were limited. Most Negroes worked as waiters, cooks, maids. porters and janitors. They worked in but few trades, the steel mills, the building trades or on the railroads. While there had been a decided increase in the number of Negro industrial employees, they were held in the lowest stages of the work,

---

[15] Chicago Defender, November 11, 1916, p. 2.

[16] John T. Emlem, "Negro Immigration in Philadelphia," Southern Workman 46 (October 1917): 555.

[17] A. L. Manly, "Where Negroes Live in Philadelphia," Opportunity 1 (May 1923): 11.

particularly in the larger plants, where almost 100 percent of the Negroes were doing unskilled work. The women were restricted chiefly to domestic service; and though this restriction was resented by them, they did economically as well as white girls of similar efficiency and training.[18]

---

[18] John T. Emlem, "Movement for the Betterment of the Negro in Philadelphia," Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 49 (September 1913): 88.

CHAPTER IV

THE EFFECTS OF THE MIGRATION ON NEGROES IN THE CITY

After arriving in the large Northern cities of Chicago, New York and Philadelphia, Negroes found themselves confronted with many problems of social disorganization.

The migrants brought with them two institutions: the matrifocal family and the church, which in modified form, functioned to adjust Negroes to the dismal realities of urban life.

When the migrants moved into the cities, they found that women could obtain and hold jobs more easily than men; women became domestic servants, and their work was steadier and commonly more in demand than that of men. In a society where men were regarded as responsible for the support of their families, Negro men often felt inadequate. The results were frequent separations of the wife and husband and an increase in households where the mother or grandmother was the central figure.[1]

According to the 1920 census, 38.9 percent of Negro women of ten years and over were gainfully employed, and 44.9 percent of employed Negro women over fifteen years of age was married. Negro women made up 84.7 percent of the married women with husbands not living with their families. Of the 8,394 Negro women at work, 41.3 percent of them had

---

[1]August Meier and Elliott M. Rudwick, From Plantation to Ghetto (New York: Hill and Wang, 1968), p. 204.

children.[2]

Of the Negro women who had migrated to Northern cities, a large proportion were domestic servants. About 30 percent of the Negro female breadwinners in Chicago and 47 percent of those in New York were reported as servants. For Philadelphia, the percentage of female servants was 54. In New York City the number of female servants fell off from 113,409 in 1910 to 84,615 in 1920; in Philadelphia, from 37,050 to 28,290. White female servants in Northern cities were to a large extent being replaced by Negroes; for while the number of white female servants, foreign born as well as native, had decreased, the number of Negro female servants increased. Thus, in Chicago in 1920, 23.9 percent, or about one-fourth of the female servants were Negroes as compared with 10.2 percent in 1910. In New York, the percent of Negroes in the total number of female servants increased from 12.4 in 1910 to 22.4 in 1920; in Philadelphia from 38.5 to 53.8 percent. This large number of female servants in the work force added to the unstable nature of the Negro families.[3]

Another factor against Negro family life was the large number of Negroes in domestic and personal services, including those who worked in hotels, clubs, and places of recreation. Negroes in such places observed white people not in the course of their normal life but mostly on holiday or parade. These servants carried over into their everyday behavior many of the practices which were inimical to normal family life. They often

---

[2]U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Occupation and Population, 4:367.

[3]Joseph A. Hill, "The Effects of the Recent Northward Migration of Negroes," Publication of the American Sociological Society 18 (March 1923): 344.

initiated standards of expenditure which were neither applicable to their economic or social position in their racial group.[4]

The attitude of the courts and of other whites who dealt with the Northern Negro family caused disorganization. There was still a general tendency to scoff at regulated sex relations among Negroes. When problems of broken homes came before courts, the judges constantly refused to take the marital relations seriously because they claimed that they had no time to worry with such matters affecting Negroes. The sympathy of the court was more often with the deserting husband.[5]

Further, illegitimacy was tied up to disorganization of family life in the urban community. Illegitimacy in the city had a different definition and different consequences from what it had in the rural sections. It became a social problem in the city where the child was not integrated into the family group. It often represented the breakdown of neighborhood and parental control which was the result of urban life.[6]

On the other hand, Negroes believed that the Negro family in the North, although considerably segregated, had advantages over their former families in the South, such as access to theatres, public libraries, park playgrounds, museums and non-"Jim Crow" railroad and street cars. Negroes were taking part more and more in the civic and political affairs of the community. Newspapers and magazines, especially Negro newspapers and magazines, were being read as never before. Negro newspapers and

---

[4]E. Franklin Frazier, "Three Scourges of the Negro Family," Opportunity 4 (July 1926): 212.

[5]Ibid., p. 214.

[6]Irene J. Graham, "The Negro Family," Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 140 (November 1928): 46.

magazines with the largest circulation were published in Chicago and New York. The headquarters of nearly all the Negro betterment organizations were now in northern cities and many of the general officers of the Negro churches had moved North.[7]

Negro people have always possessed an unusually strong interest in religious activities; and since a large proportion of them were members of some religious organization, the churches of the North were immediately affected by the influx of Negro laborers and their families. There had developed some strong church organizations in every city. The churches' great need was better trained leadership. In a few cities Negro congregations had bought or built institutional plants and were employing trained social workers; Abyssinia Baptist Church, St. Phillip's P. E. Church, Williams Institutional C.M.E. Church, and Mother Zion A.M.E. Church in New York City. St. John's Congregational Church in Springfield, Massachusetts; Mount Zion Congregational Church and St. John's A.M.E. Church in Cleveland; Olivet Baptist Church and two community churches in Chicago; and Sharpe Street M.E. Church in Baltimore, were prophecies of great community service and showed the possibilities.[8]

As soon as a crowd of migrants arrived, most of them sought at once to transfer their membership from the little churches of their Southern communities to the "watch care" or to full membership in churches in Northern communities. In a few cases whole congregations from Southern communities had moved North together and brought their pastors with them. In other cases, Negro churches in Northern cities which before the heavy

---

[7]George Edmund Haynes, "Negro Migration: Its Effect on Family and Community Life in the North," Opportunity 2 (September/October 1924): 303-4.

[8]Haynes, "Negro Migration: Its Effect on Family and Community Life in the North," p. 304.

migration of the 1910-1920 years had small struggling congregations greatly increased their membership and became powerful resources. Many of the churches had ministers who--like the physicians, lawayers, editors, and businessmen who followed in the wake of the wage earners--had come from the South to answer the Northern call.[9]

Store-front churches, too, helped in the readjustment process. These sprang to life in abandoned or condemned buildings formerly housing retail shops such as grocery and dry-goods stores. The established places of worship maintained their formalities of dress and conduct, but no such rules circumscribed the store-front congregation. The preacher usually worked somewhere during the day, and sometimes lived in the rear of the long room furnished with crude benches and goods-crate altar. Front windows were rudely painted in imitation of the stained-glass windows of more pretentious edifices.[10]

However, the most important thing about the store-front church was that everybody participated. Untrained but powerful voices joined in hymns sung in such an unorthodox manner that they gave rise to a whole body of gospel music. The preacher might be illiterate, but he spoke a homely, straight-from-the-shoulder language understood by all. The names of the store-front churches were as picturesque as their services--Willing Worker's Spiritualist, Israel of God Canaan's Pilgrims, Spiritual Love Circle, Blessed St. Martin, Peter's Rock Baptist, Prophetic Spiritual, Purple Rose Mystical Temple, Crossroads to Happiness, Followers of

---

[9]George E. Haynes, "The Church and the Negro Spirit," Survey 53 (March 1925): 696.

[10]Arna Bontemps and Jack Conroy, Anyplace But Here (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), p. 173.

Exodus, Church of Lost Souls.[11]

In Chicago, during the five-year period from 1910 to 1915, twelve Negro churches were organized; but in the following five-year period from 1915-1920, which covered the years of heavy migration, thirty-four churches were organized and fifteen of these in the year 1918 alone.[12]

Among Negro groups the church was frequently the center of social as well as religious life, and this double hold had probably been important in the development of the Negroes' keen interest in religion. The importance of the social function was evident in Southern rural churches, but it retained a prominent place in the activities in the North. When migrants began to arrive in large numbers, many Northern churches established employment bureaus, recreation centers, and welfare agencies in order to meet the complex needs of the Negro people in their new environment.[13]

During this period the Negro church activities had been described as 75 percent social and 25 percent religious. And there was no doubt that even in the North it had been called upon to help satisfy the Negro's desire for social relationships and recreation. Negroes were so prohibited from mingling with white people in public amusement and recreational centers or were so subject to the possibility of embarrassment if they did enter places visited by white people that many of them preferred to find recreation in the activities of their churches. As a consequence,

---

[11] Ibid., p. 174.

[12] Harold M. Kingsley, "The Negro Goes to Church," Opportunity 7 (March 1929): 90.

[13] Adelaide Lyons, "Prayin' Members up North," World Outlook 5 (October 1919):32.

the church strengthened its hold on the lives of these people.[14]

With the rapid increase of Negro population in Northern cities, church facilities became inadequate both in seating space for the assembly of worshippers and in arrangements for religious education. The Negro church was still small compared to white churches and insufficient to give the social ministry to the thousands of migrants who came. For example, in 1920 the estimated seating capacity of Negro churches in Greater New York was about 1,000. In 1924 in Harlem the number of Negro churches increased to twenty-seven. Some of the churches were previously white and others were erected by Negroes. The estimated seating capacity of these twenty-seven churches in Harlem alone was about 21,000. Of these twenty-seven churches there were thirteen with an estimated seating capacity from 500 to 2,500 each; the others ranged from 200 to 400 in seating capacity.[15]

In the North there was an educational problem for Negro children. The northward movement of Negroes since slavery and the migration of a half million Negroes from the South following the outbreak of World War I had brought thousands of children from the unsatisfactory schools of many sections of the South.

When reclassified according to the more regular and rigid requirements of the Northern schools, they became overage pupils, large, awkward children ranging in ages from thirteen to eighteen in classes with children of seven and ten. The severe embarrassments to them increased tru-

---

[14]Charles A. Findley, "The Church that Welcomed 10,000 Strangers," World Outlook 5 (October 1919): 5-6.

[15]Haynes, "The Church and the Negro Spirit," p. 697.

ancy problems, delinquency and rebellion against home and school discipline. In 1915 a study of five hundred Negro children in the New York public schools, which accommodated the largest number of children whose parents represented the migrants, revealed that 60.5 percent of the normal children were overage for their grade. Some had entered school there for the first time at the age of twelve and fifteen.[16]

Legally, Northern states in many instances did not require the segregation of Negro children in separate school; however, the rapid increase of Negroes from the South in several Northern cities caused an increasing tendency toward some degree of separation. Nevertheless, in New York and Chicago there were no separate schools or separate rooms within schools for Negro children. In Chicago, Negro children were sent to particular schools which were largely Negro or were discouraged from enrolling in schools which contained a large majority of white pupils. However, where distinctions between Negro and white children did occur in Chicago, they seemed to be due to the attitude of individual principals and teachers since the Chicago School Board made no such differentiation and did not make a practice of maintaining separate schools.[17]

In Philadelphia, there were 12 schools which had 100 percent Negro attendance. All the teachers were Negroes including the principal. Negro children living in areas near but not included in the district of these schools, still attended them but white children living in the district

---

[16]Eugene Kinckle Jones, "Problems of the Colored Child," Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 98 (November 1921): 143.

[17]T. J. Woofter, Negro Problems in Cities (New York: Doubleday Doran and Company, 1928), p. 177.

of the schools having all Negro pupils and teachers were sent out of their district to schools which had 100 percent white attendance. In many of the smaller cities and towns the school authorities had been quite frank in segregation of the races. In such towns as Coatesville and Chester there were separate schools for all Negro children up to and including the Junior High School. Even in communities where it was financially difficult to establish separate school buildings for Negroes, the authorities had developed what had been called a "Union Room." In these "Union Rooms" were placed all the Negro children in the school irrespective of grades. The resulting situation was that the white children of the school were distributed in grades, usually one grade to a room, the Negro children of varying ages were grouped together regardless of school grade.[18]

Furthermore, separation in mixed schools was done by seating arrangements. Seating arrangments differed widely and often depended on the attitude of the teachers. Negro children often occupied only the front seats or the back seats; in some schools or rooms they were grouped on one side or occupied alternate rows; sometimes they were seated without regard to race. However, principals, teachers, and school boards had at times maintained that separation of school children on the basis of race was a necessity because of the high rate of retardation among Negro children and that the presence of a number of slow, overage pupils was likely to hinder the progress of other members of the class.[19]

---

[18]Kennedy, The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward, p. 189.

[19]George E. Payne, "Negroes in the Public Elementary Schools of the North," Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 140 (November 1928): 226.

Retardation among Negroes in Northern schools was more prevalent than among white children and the problem of handling these overaged pupils presented serious difficulties to Northern school authorities. Not only was the proportion of retarded children higher among Negroes than among white children, but also the degree or number of years of retardation was highest among Negro pupils since many were from two to five years behind their normal grades.[20]

Retardation or overage among Negroes was closely linked with migration, for many of those retarded had come from the South. When distinctions were made between Northern and Southern Negroes, it was found in comparing them with white pupils that there was usually no great difference between Northern Negro and white students in this respect.

The causes of retardation among Negroes indicated that migrant children who had transfered from Southern schools had been seriously handicapped by poor educational facilities there, by short terms and by inadequate compulsory school laws. A large proportion of the children had been overaged when they entered schools and others who had been in their normal age grades in the South had been demoted in the North because they had not received sufficient training to keep up with the Northern class.[21]

Another cause of retardation was found to be poor home conditions. Many of the parents were migrants who needed the economic help of the children and put them to work if possible or else were unacquainted with Northern school systems and did not voluntarily observe the school attendance laws. Furthermore, many of the mothers were at work away from home

---

[20] Ibid., p. 220.

[21] Kelly Miller, "Education of Negroes in the North," Educational Review 62 (October 1921): 234.

all day and were unable to see to it that their children went to school regularly and stayed there during school hours. However, irregular attendance did not seem to play so large a part in producing the higher rate of retardation among Negro children as did the inferior quality of southern education.[22]

To the Northern Negro, the migration brought discrimination and humiliation where he had never known it before. He began to be unlawfully segregated, barred from eating and drinking places, theatres, parks, beaches and other public resorts. In Dayton, Ohio, which had a street named in honor of its great Negro poet, Dunbar, Negro people before the migration could go unquestioned into any place of amusement and be served at any public accommodation. But, the southern Negro with his inferior education and culture and his inability to adjust to northern standards of living and modes of conduct, contributed to the increasing segregation policies imposed on Negroes in general.[23]

Philadelphia had long possessed a small population of Negroes of culture, education and some financial means. They had always enjoyed the same social and educational facilities as the whites and courted treatment from them. But with the increase in population by a group of generally uneducated and untrained persons, these privileges were withdrawn. The old Negro citizens of Philadelphia resented this, placed the

---

[22]Woofter, Negro Problems in Cities, p. 179.

[23]William Pickens, "Migrating to Fuller Life," Forum 72 (November 1924): 603.

blame at the migrant's door and stood aloof from them. It was believed that more friendly contacts were established as the migrants became permanently settled in the city and adjusted to urban life.[24]

---

[24]Sadie T. Mossell, "The Standard of Living Among 100 Negro Migrant Families in Philadelphia," Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 98 (November 1921): 177.

CONCLUSION

As has been noted, most Negroes were bound for the so-called "promised land," of the northern industrial centers. Handicapped by limitations of economic opportunities and discrimination in the matter of employment and advancement in the South, Negro migration to the North resulted in real improvement in Negro working conditions, a wider choice of occupations and usually higher wages than were offered in the South.

The South did not want the Negro to leave. Persuasion, threats, false arrest and even mob violence were tried to hinder him. Labor agents from the North paid exorbitant license fees and when the agent paid the fee in one town he found his license no good in the next town. These practices did not keep the Negro from leaving the South.

However, Negroes were still mainly confined to unskilled and poorly paid positions, but at least the variety of occupations open to them had been increased, and there had been a significant addition to the number performing skilled and semi-skilled tasks. Negro women had shared to some extent in these new industrial openings, but their status was still uncertain and their advance out of domestic service into industry had seldom equalled that of the men in industrial fields.

In housing, Negroes occupied old, dilapidated buildings in the poorest areas. High rents and low wages caused families to take in lodgers in order to meet expenses.

Although Negroes in northern cities were not accorded the full measure of freedom and opportunity of the whites, it must not be overlooked that migration had tended to improve the social as well as the economic status of the newcomers. They found better schools than they had ever been accustomed to; they occupied homes which were at least a little better than those they left in the South. In spite of the higher cost of living and the difficulties of adaptation to a totally new environment, there seems to have been a real advancement in the migrant's standard of living.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

U. S. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Occupation and Population, Vol. 2.

U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Occupation and Population, Vol. 4.

Newspapers

Atlanta Constitution

Chicago Defender

Secondary Sources

Books

Bontemps, Arna and Conroy, Jack. Anyplace But Here. New York: Hill and Wang, 1966.

Kennedy, Louise Venable. The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward. New York: Columbia University Press, 1930.

Leavell, R. H. Negro Migration in 1916-17. New York: University Press, 1969.

Meier, August and Rudwick, Elliott. From Plantation to Ghetto. New York: Hill and Wang, 1968.

Osofsky, Gilbert. Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966.

Scott, Emmett J. Negro Migration During the War. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969.

Spear, Allan H. Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Tindall, George B. The Emergence of the New South 1913-1945. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967.

Williams, W. T. B., and Tyson, Francis D. Reports on the Migration from Georgia. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969.

Woodson, Carter G. A Century of Negro Migration. Washington, D. C.: The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1918.

Woofter, Thomas Jackson. Basis of Racial Adjustment. New York: Ginn and Canpan, 1925.

_____. Negro Problems in Cities. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1928.

Articles

Baker, Ray Stannard. "The Negro Goes North." World's Work 34 (July 1917): 314-19.

Barnett, Claude A. "We Win a Place in Industry." Opportunity 8 (March 1929): 82-86.

Comstock, Alzada P. "Chicago Housing Conditions: The Problem of the Negro." American Journal of Sociology 18 (September 1912): 241-57.

Emlem, John T. "Negro Immigration in Philadelphia." Southern Workman 46 (October 1917): 553-57.

_____. "Movement for the Betterment of the Negro in Philadelphia." Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 49 (September 1913): 81-92.

Frazier, E. Franklin. "Three Scourges of the Negro Family." Opportunity 4 (July 1926): 210-13.

Findley, Charles A. "The Church that Welcomed 10,000 Strangers." World Outlook 5 (October 1919): 5-6.

Graham, Irene J. "The Negro Family." Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 140 (November 1928): 44-51.

Hill, Joseph A. "The Effects of the Recent Northward Migration of Negroes." Publications of the American Sociological Society 18 (March 1923): 34-46.

Haynes, George E. "The Church and the Negro Spirit." Survey 53 (March 1925): 695-97.

_____. "Negro Migration: Its Effect on Family and Community Life in the North." Opportunity 2 (September/October 1924): 271-74; 303-06.

"How Can the South Meet the Negro Migration Movement." Manufacturers Record 83 (May 3, 1923): 88-90.

Jones, Eugene Kinckle. "Problems of Colored Child." Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 98 (November 1921): 142-47.

Johnson, Charles S. "Black Workers and the City." Survey 53 (March 1925): 641-43.

Kingsley, Harold M. "The Negro Goes to Church." Opportunity 7 (March 1929): 90-91.

Lett, H. A. "Additional Letters of Negro Migrants of 1916-1918." Journal of Negro History 4 (July/October 1919): 291-340; 412-65.

Lyons, Adelaide. "Prayin' Members Up North." World Outlook 5 (October 1919): 32-33.

Manley, A. L. "Where Negroes Live in Philadelphia." Opportunity 1 (May 1923): 10-15.

McDowell, Mary E. "Hovels or Homes." Opportunity 7 (March 1929): 74-77.

Miller, Kelly. "Education of Negro in the North." Educational Review 62 (October 1921): 232-38.

Mossell, Sadie T. "The Standard of Living Among 100 Negro Migrant Families in Philadelphia." Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 98 (November 1921): 173-218.

"National Conference on Negro Migration." Nation 140 (February 8, 1917): 149-150.

Ovington, Mary W. "The Negro in the Trades Unions in New York." Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 27 (May 1906): 89-91.

Payne, George E. "Negroes in the Public Elementary Schools in the North." Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 140 (November 1928): 224-33.

Pickens, William. "Migrating to Fuller Life." Forum 72 (November 1924): 600-07.

Scroggs, W. O. "Interstate Migration of Negro Population." Journal of Political Economy 25 (December 1917): 10-40.

Wright, R. R. "The Migration of Negroes to the North." Annals of the American Academy of Political Science 27 (May 1906): 559-78.